ENDEAVOUR

The Coat-of-Arms of the City of Gisborne

One unusual community project evolved with the Captain Cook Bicentenary in mind was the obtaining of a Coat-of-Arms for the City of Gisborne. The idea was first submitted by the Community Public Relations Office and, in due course, the City Council asked for some preliminary design work to be done locally.

The Gisborne City Coat-of-Arms was designed eventually over a period of eighteen months and submitted to Chester Herald of the College of Arms in 1967 by a Committee of four Gisborne residents. The City Council was persuaded of the need to register the Arms and this was done in due course with the College of Heralds in England.

The Gisborne City Coat-of-Arms is unique on two points:

1. It was evolved and obtained by community effort and enthusiasm rather than by municipal decision, and
2. It has the only "compartment" derived from traditional Māori ethnic design.

The Arms of the City of Gisborne

Argent a Pall reversed Azure between in chief two Bulls' heads erased Gules and in base a Mitre and On a Chief wavy Azure a representation of HM Bark "Endeavour" (of the 18th century) in full sail proper. And for the Crest On a Wreath of the Colours in Front of a Sun rising OR a Mountain Peak Azure representing Mount Hikurangi issuing from Clouds proper.

For the Supporters: On the dexter side a Lion queue fourche Ermines collared dovetailed OR and on the sinister side a Lion OR collared dovetailed Sable standing upon a Compartment composed of the prow and forepart and the afterpart and stern of the Māori War Canoes Takitimu and Horouta, respectively, and joined amidships by a carved Māori Koruru head affrontly.

Description

The Arms (on the shield) represent the following:

- The Pall, or inverted "Y" signifies the Taruheru and Waimata Rivers conjoining into the Turanganui River which flows out to the sea, represented by the Chief wavy. On the Chief is the "Endeavour" to note the first landing on New Zealand by Captain James Cook on 9 October 1769.
- The Bulls' heads represent the agricultural aspects of the Eastern Districts, while the Mitre represents the coming of Christianity to the East Coast through Bishop Williams and his descendants.
- The Crest displays a sunburst enclosing Mount Hikurangi and is significant of the fact that, on the true meridian, Mount Hikurangi and East Cape are the first major land points on which the rising sun shines.
- The Lions, as supporters, are included from the Family Arms of the Hon. William Gisborne MLC, after whom the City was named. In fact, the ermine sable lion is of this family. The golden lion was included for balance. The forked tail of the sable lion represents the main highways North and South from Gisborne, while the single tail of the golden lion represents the East Coast Scenic Highway to Opotiki.

- Dovetailed collars in reverse colours on the lions symbolise the fusion of and harmony between Māori and Pakeha.
- The Compartment is a unique departure in Heraldry, being totally in a Māori idiom. It represents the Māori people as the original inhabitants of New Zealand and the "base" on which the area's "achievement" is built. The Koruru Head, in Māori carving, is the "Keeper of the House" and is placed at the apex of the entrance gable of every Meeting House. The Takitimu and Horouta canoes, according to Māori legend, were those which landed on the East Coast at the time of the Great Migration and from which landed the ancestors of the present tribes in residence.
- The Motto, though unregistered, is "Endeavour" and refers both to the aspirations of the area and to the first European landing in New Zealand by James Cook.